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No. 11.

When Ann Acted

By George M. Rosener.

ADOLPH E. REIM,

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A COMEDY, DRAMATIC, VAUDEVILLE PLAYETTE IN TWO SCENES.

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CHARACTERS.

ANN.....*A Stranded Soubrette.*
THAD. HIPPLE.....*A Rube.*

SCENES.

Open In One, Close In Full Stage.
SCENE 1.—*A Country Road.*
SCENE 2.—*The Kitchen in Hipple's Home.*

DESCRIPTION OF SETS.

(For the country road a landscape or wood drop can be used).

(The kitchen is set in three doors, R. & L. and R. I. F. Old prints and pictures are hanging on the walls. Rag carpet on the floor and old fashion furniture is set about in various positions. The essential furniture is a rocking chair down R., table and chairs L. A bible on the table and a picture of a woman in the bible. A small table and a lighted lamp up C.).

(At rise of curtain on front scene, red lights are on).

(Lights are full up, on second scene).

WHEN ANN ACTED

(*At rise of curtain* ANN *enters R. carrying two battered suit cases. She comes on very slow and sits on one of the bags*).

Ann—Gee, but this is tough; down and out in a punk town. Ah, what's show business coming to anyway? If I could get a real job washing dishes, I'd take it so quick they would think I was loose in me loft. If that conductor was a good feller he would have let me ride until I got to a city, instead of that he drops me off at this frog puddle. I wonder if there is a nickel picture house in the town. I might get a job there for a few days, and I am some hungry too, my stomach is beginning to wonder if my throat has been cut. (*Looks off L.*). Hello, here comes a yap, maybe I can tell him some watery tale and make a touch.

Thad.—(*Enters L. carrying a boquet of flowers*). Howdy Miss?

Ann—Hello sport! How far is the town from here?

Thad.—Three miles.

Ann—Which way?

Thad.—Wal I'll tell yer. (*Points off L.*). Take the first cross road that leads to the left, cross the bridge when yer get to Jasper's farm, take the short cut through the woods and at the first mile post go over the second hill, as you pass the third wind mill, when you see a house with green shutters go on east along the west side of the creek, keep on goin' 'till yer come to a covered bridge, wait there until somebody passes and then ask them where the town is and they will tell yer.

Ann—How long did it take you to learn that?

Thad.—Eh?

Ann—When they built this town, why did they try to hide it?

Thad.—Say, you're kinder slaterin' aint yer?

Ann—I don't know what that means, but if you ask me whether I am taking the down and out cure for being over wise, I will answer you in the language of the poet and softly murmur: She do.

Thad.—Young woman, I don't see any need fer you ter go cussin' me out this way. I never done nothin' ter you.

Ann—Now don't get sore.

Thad.—I don't calculate to, though I do have the rheumatics sometimes all powerful bad.

Ann—That's tough! Ever try Mt. Clemmens?

Thad.—No, I like Doan's Kidney Pills the best.

Ann—(*Aside*). Gee, and this is America too!

Thad.—Say, yer a stranger about here, aint yer?

Ann—As strange as a full blown rose in a snow bank.

Thad.—Are you a book agent?

Ann—Worse than that!

Thad.—Perhaps yer a pill peddler?

Ann—Come again!

Thad.—Sellin' eye glasses maybe?

Ann—No, I am a trooper.

Thad.—In what regiment?

Ann—You don't get me yet. I am an actorine.

Thad.—You'll have ter talk English Miss, I aint no Italian.

Ann—I am one of the merry, merry, I was out with a brood of Broadway broilers and squabs, and we went to pieces.

Thad.—All smashed, eh?

Ann—Stranded high and dry.

Thad.—So you was in the broiler and squab business, eh?

Ann—Yep!

Thad.—How did yer raise them, with a settin' hen or an incubator?

Ann—Say, I aint talking about a chicken farm.

Thad.—No?

Ann—No! I'm talking about show business.

Thad.—Oh, you're a show actor?

Ann—Now you have said something.

Thad.—So I supposed.

Ann—In me you see the prima dona of the Broadway Broilers, defunct, deceased, extinct and planted.

Thad.—What are yer doin' here?

Ann—God knows!

Thad.—Do you know where you are going ter stop? (*She shakes her head in the negative*). Up at the Commercial House they take show folks in fer a dollar a day.

Ann—A dollar a day! Pal; if they was sellin' hotels at fifty

cents a piece, I couldn't buy the sunshine on the roof!

Thad.—You aint got no money, eh?

Ann—Money? Gee! Say, you won't believe it, but one time I owned a two dollar bill.

Thad.—Aint married, be yer?

Ann—I was once, but it didn't take.

Thad.—What wus the trouble?

Ann—Supportin' him was hard enough, but when it came to handing out loose change to keep his particular lady friend well stocked with silk open work stockings, when yours truly wore the two for a quarter brand; well, I couldn't just see it that way, so I hocked my soul to the lawyers and got a receipt in which was stated that I was now free, and that my better half could go up and down the Great White way juggling the high sign.

Thad.—Mother livin'?

Ann—Died when I was a creepin' kid.

Thmad.—Was she a show actor too?

Ann—That's what they tell me.

Thad—Where's yer dad?

Ann—Never knew I had one.

Thad.—That's funny, I allers thought that girls usually have a father.

Ann—Yes, the lucky ones do. (*Produces a box of cigarettes*). Have a trophy?

Thad.—A what?

Ann— A cigarette.

Thad.—No thanks, I'll smoke a pipe.

Ann—(*Lighting the cigarette*). Aint got anything on yer hip, have yer?

Thad.—Yes, I've got the darndest scar there yer ever saw! I was kicked by a horse.

Ann—I mean something to drink.

Thad.—There's a nice spring of cold water down the road a piece.

Ann—No thanks, I washed my face this morning.

Thad.—Say, don't yer think that young girls is getting wicked when they smoke cigarettes and drink liquor?

Ann—Gee, I've got to do something to ferget, I've tried everything else that I know of.

Thad.—Did yer ever try work?

Ann—Friend, every time that I loom in sight, work gets the

blind staggers in both eyes.

Thad.—You know where you will end if yer keep up this gol durn picture book life?

Ann—Now don't start to preach! I like you because you have got a few corners to you. You're square. Don't preach or I'll get sore.

Thad.—Jest as you say, you're the doctor. Great Ceaser's Ghost, and Little Fishes of the Hellter Spot!

Ann—Nix, nix, don't throw any fits around here, or I'll beat it quick.

Thad.—Say, I got an idea!

Ann—I thought you had the D. T's, or the A. P. A's or something like that.

Thad.—Look here, I want to help you out.

Ann—And I need it, believe me!

Thad.—Suppose you and me hire the town hall and give some kind of a show. I uster be king bee in all the hum talent shows around here. What do yer think of the idea?

Ann—Great! Pal, if you was in N. Y. you'd make Belasco look like a dirty collar in a bride's Trousseau.

Thad.—I'll hire the hall and pay fer hand bills. You sing, don't yer?

Ann—Well I can make a stab at it.

Thad.—This is as good a spot as any, suppose you kick her up a little?

(*INTRODUCE SPECIALTY*).

Ann—(*After specialty*). Say do you know we ought ter do something in the legit line?

Thad.—No, I'm too old fer acrobatics.

Ann—No, no, you don't understand! I mean a scene from a real play, something dramatic. I never had a chance, except before a looking glass, to pull the Leslie Carter stunt, and I hate to let this one go by. If we can only wind up with me throwing a Bernhardt fit all over the stage, it will make the agony more complete.

Thad.—Uncle Tom's Cabin allers takes well in this town.

Ann—No, that will never do! We must hand them something with class to it.

Thad—Do you know how to do that kind of play acting?

Ann—When you're down and out friend, there aint nothing you can't do from committing murder to raising twins.

Thad.—All right, we'll practice up at my house. You walk down

the road and I'll catch up with yer. I must take these flowers up here a ways.

Ann—Taking flowers to your best girl, eh?

Thad.—I allers do once a week, anyway.

Ann—Where does she live?

Thad.—(*Points R.*). Over there on that hill.

Ann—(*Looking off*). Why, that's the cemetery!

Thad.—Yes, that's where she lives.

Ann—Is it your wife?

Thad.—Yes, she used ter live in the city, afore we got married. Maybe yer heard tell on her? Her name was Sal Prynn.

Ann—Never!

Thad.—Wal, she got tired of me arter we was married a short time and I didn't blame her none, yer see she was used ter excitement and all that and couldn't stand the country like me, who was used to it. Of course, I was a fool in the first place ter even think that a woman, who was so smart and purty and city educated, could ever put up very long with a no account cuss like me; so one night arter I come home from a meetin' of the city council, I finds a note saying that she had left by the night train fer the city. She thanked me in the note fer lovin' her and treatin' her so well, and said that rather than stay and make me miserable, she was going away. It was the city she said, that was callin' her and then she wrote a whole lot more, about it being in the blood and about her mother doing something like the same thing and her grandmother before her.

Ann—Then you didn't have any children?

Thad.—There was a baby born I heered, three months arter she left.

Ann—Did she ever come back?

Thad.—No, they brought her back ter me, dead. I never heered nothin' about the child, so I reckon it died too, because I heered arterwards that Sal almost died of starvation in N. Y. You're the first one I ever talked to about this, I never mention it to any one in the village, but then I'd sooner trust a stranger, than I would my own folks. I take these flowers up there for two reasons, first, because no matter what Sal did, she war my wife and I loved her, and second, because I like ter show some of them character stranglers livin' in the village, that I think as much of Sal as I allers did, and them as have other ideas can keep em to themselves and be durned. Now that I have cussed a little, I feel better.

And now you run along down the road and I'll soon catch up with yer. (*Exit R.*).

Ann—(*Looking after him*). Gee, every time I meet up with a whole souled man like him, all the other geeks I know, look like pieces of cheese. (*Picks up suit cases and exits L.*).

(*PULL OFF TO FULL STAGE*).

(ANN *enters D. I. F. followed by* THAD).

Thad.—That's a durn good idea Miss, now explain it again so that I will be sure to understand it.

Ann—Now we will call this act, The Long Lost Sister. And here is how it is to work out: You are my brother and I play the dame, what beat it away from the country home with a swell city guy, with a fat roll and curled mustache. Now I blow back after some years and run up against you. I pick you for a green one, but when I get a peek at the family album, I am next in a minute that one picture there is our mother. Just when I am making a get away with your sock full of lose change, you try to beat my crust in with a coal shovel, but I scream out, "That is me mother!" And you are hep in a minute. Then comes a big noise and slam bang, finish!

Thad.—The way you tell it, sounds all right, I don't jest know how it will be when I have it translated.

Ann—You know you'll have to shave off your whiskers, if you are going to play my brother?

Thad.—Then I don't play.

Ann—Why not?

Thad.—Me and these whiskers has been in the war together, and we aint goin' ter do no partin' now.

Ann—All right, keep them on! Now listen, the stage is set just like this room. It is supposed to be my room. Have you got a picture of a lady about?

Thad.—(*Takes a picture from the album which he lays on the table*). Here is one, be careful of it won't you?

Ann—Sure! You see you are supposed to have left this picture here by mistake. Now, when you hear me say, "I will leave him," you rush on and say, "woman, I know all," then I say, "Oh spare me, spare my life." Then you say, "never, you have trifled with muh love and thusly must you die!" You grab a coal shovel and right here is where we pull the big scene. Have you got me?

Thad.—(*Scratching his head*). I think so.

Ann—All right, now beat it.

Thad.—Eh?

Ann—Go off! Go off!

Thad.—Oh, I am supposed to be loaded and I explode, eh?

Ann—No, get off the stage! Get out there (*Points L.*). and wait for your cue!

Thad.—Oh! (*Exit L.*).

Ann—Listen to what I am saying now. Here I go!

Thad.—(*Off stage*). All right, let her rip.

Ann—(*Very affected and amateurish*). Ah, me, I have done well here, after all! This poor country lout, who is in love with me is like all the rest of his tribe, a poor dope! Ah well, I will bleed Harry once more, AND THEN——

Thad.—(*Puts his head in at the door*). Say, I wouldn't say nothin' about Harry, because that's the name of our town constable, and his wife might not like it.

Ann—Please don't give the director any directions.

Thad.—I aint doin' nuthin' of the kind. I'm jest givin' you a little friendly advice that's all.

Ann—Please go outside and wait for your cue.

Thad.—Wal, I aint particular. (*Withdraws his head*).

Ann—Fifteen years ago when I left this town, I did not think I would return and be forgotten. It all comes back to me now, I was but twenty-four years of age, a mean child for my years. To return and see old faces after these fifteen years is a shock, I did not think when I left twelve years ago that I would come back after five years and find it all so changed. I can remember it all so well, it is just twenty years ago that I left with my financier for the big city——

Thad.—(*Puts his head in at the door*). Excuse me, but aint you kinder mixed in your calculations?

Ann—What do you mean?

Thad.—Why, your years are all befuddled!

Ann—That makes no difference, the plot makes no difference, nothing makes no difference, so long as we get to the big scene. You wait for your cue, and don't interrupt a flow of genius again!

Thad.—Wal, I aint particular. (*Withdraws his head*).

Ann—Get ready now! I will get all the money out of Harry that I can and then——(*Pause*) And then——(*Pause*) And then, and then——(*Pause*) And THEN! Hey, that's your cue!

Thad.—(*Puts his head in at the door*). What?

Ann—I said, and then. That's your cue.

Thad.—You told me not to interrupt the flow of genius and I aint agoin' to.

Ann—Please don't be a dummie.

Thad.—I aint got no sech idea, either.

Ann—Dear me! Will you ever get wise? Please pick up your cue when it comes. When you hear me say "and then," come on the scene.

Thad—(*Withdrawing his head*). Wal, I aint particular.

Ann—I will get all I can out of this fellow and then—— and then— AND THEN— (*Stamps her foot and yells*). AND THEN—

Thad.—(*Enters R. carrying a shot gun*).

Ann—Well, what the——

Thad—Did you see anything of a black cat?

Ann—Can you beat that?

Thad.—I'll do worse than that! I'll shoot the cuss if I see it!

Ann—What's the matter now? (*Sighs*) Oh, gee!

Thad.—Oh gee, if you want to, but that aint killin' the cat, or getting back my custard pie!

Ann—Your what?

Thad.—My sister brought me down a custard pie, and that durn cat has gone and licked up the hul durn business!

Ann—Are we ever going to get to this rehearsal? Say, I need the money. Now for the love of Mike, please remember that when I say, "and then," you come on and say, "woman I know all." then I say, "spare muh, spare muh life," and you say, "never!" Then leave the rest to me.

Thad.—Wal, I aint particular. (*Exit L.*).

Ann—Are you ready?

Thad.—Yep!

Ann—I will get all the money I can and then——(THAD. *rushes on from the L. to the C. of stage, pulling at his whiskers and swallowing hard*). Well, well?

Thad.—Woman (*Swallow*) Woman (*Swallow*) Woman (*Swallow*) Woman (*Swallow*).

Ann—I know all.

Thad.—Woman——

Ann—Go on!

Thad.—There aint nothing I don't know!

Ann—Oh, spare muh, spare muh life! (THAD *swallows hard*). Never, you say never, for goodness sake, add lib something!

Thad.—Spare your spar ribs or something? Never!

Ann—Ah, the picture! (*She picks up the picture, looks at it for a moment and then her whole attitude changes and her acting becomes a reality, as she recognizes in the picture her own mother*). Where, where did you get this picture? (THAD *still thinks they are rehearsing*). Where did you get this, why don't you answer me? This is my mother, my real mother. Can't you understand? I mean it, I mean it! At last I am home, home, where I longed to be, where I prayed to be for these years, and I have a father a real living father. (*Looking at the picture*). Mother, you can hear me I know you can, I am home mother, thank God for me, because I am not worthy, I am home mother, home with him at last! (*She drops on her knees weeping*).

Thad.—(*Very much affected*). Miss, if you go play actin' like this on the stage and I have ter stand there and listen to yer, I'll jest blubber up and spill over like a pan of boiling milk. (ANN *is still sobbing*). Good Lord, Miss, are you crying in earnest?

Ann—Y-y-y-es.

Thad.—Great guns, what have I done?

Ann—Nothing, nothing, get me a glass of water, please!

Thad.—Sure, I will. (*Exit L.*)

Ann—(*When* THAD *is off,* ANN *quickly goes to one of her suit cases and takes out a picture, the exact counter part of the one on the table. She compares the two, still kneeling on the floor, beside the table*). They are the same, the very same! Mother, my own mother! (*She kisses the picture. She speaks as if she was talking to her mother*). You left him mother, you told him it was in the blood. I don't blame you for that, because you have been cursed as I am, perhaps that longing for the white lights will run out in my life. Pray for me, mother, because I need your prayers. If I tell him who I am he will grow to love me as he once loved you and loves you still, then, if the longing for the old life should claim me again, I would have to leave him and break an honest heart that is almost healed. I'll wait mother before I tell him, I'll wait for your guiding spirit to lead me to——

Thad.—(*Enters L.*). Here's the water, Miss.

Ann—(*Takes the water and drinks, at the same time she lays the one picture of her mother on the table and conceals the other*). Thank you.

Thad.—Miss, I can see that you are all tuckered out. (*Helps her to rise, she breaks down with her head upon his breast, crying*). There, There! (*Takes out a five dollar bill and hands it to her*).

Now you take this and go up to the hotel and stop there fer to-night and get a good rest, then come here in the morning and we will go on with our play actin'.

Ann—(*Between the tears*). Thank you.

Thad.—(*Leads her to D. I. F.*). There, little girl, you get some supper and a good night's sleep. Good night!

Ann—(*As she kisses his hand*). Good night, thank you and God bless you! Good night! (*Exit D. I. F.*).

Thad—(*Takes the lamp from table and puts on his glasses. All lights go out. He picks up the picture and sits looking at it as the curtain slowly descends*).

(*As the curtain descends only the light from the lamp is seen playing on Thad's. features*).

—*FINIS.*—

(*Act will play about twenty-two minutes, with specialty*).
(*Music and music cues are left to the judgment of producer*).

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